

Nutrithon to benefit NCRC housing project

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Kannapolis Rotary Club leaders asked the Kannapolis City Council to support a new event called the Nutrithon Duathlon that they hope will become the "Kentucky Derby" of the area, but without the horses.

The first Nutrithon Duathlon will be a run-bike-run event for human athletes and scheduled for Aug. 20. The Rotary plans to make it one of the primary fundraisers in an effort to raise more than \$250,000 for the development of affordable, dormitory-style housing for researchers and students visiting the N.C. Research Campus.

William "Whit" Whitley, chairman of the Kannapolis Rotary Club, said there is an urgent need for affordable, short term housing for visiting students and faculty, who frequently also have more permanent housing on or near their main university campus.

"Visiting researchers have had to stay with host families," Whitley said. "It is hard to rent on a short-term basis. We want everyone to back us and stand tall on this."

Already, the Kannapolis Rotary Club has raised \$23,500 for the dormitory plan. Dole Foods donated \$20,000. UNC Charlotte donated \$1,000. One Rotarian and his wife have pledged \$2,500 to the effort. Charlotte Sports Cycling will take care of race logistics. The Nutrithon Duathlon will include a signature run-bike-run event. Participants of all experience

levels will be welcome to participate in the event.

"A duathlon is a multi-sport event," said Neal Boyd, owner of Charlotte Sports cycling. Participants in the three-part race start out with a 5K run, then do a 25K cycling route and finish the race with a 3K run. "When you hit the pavement and you've been on the bike, that can be difficult."

The start and finish will be on the N.C. Research Campus. The race will wind through Kannapolis and Cabarrus County roads. The Nutrithon also includes a bike rodeo promoting cycling safety for children and separate 5K and 8K races.

"My goal in this, councilman and mayor, is for you to sanction this event. It's my intention to make the Nutrithon the Kentucky Derby of this area," Whitley said.

Whitley answered council members' questions about the proposed affordable housing. The proposed size of the dorm and where it will be located remains to be determined. Those questions will begin to be answered after the Nutrithon, Whitley said, adding Rotarians want a better idea of how much they can raise.

The dorm could involve the renovation of an existing building or the construction of a new facility, Whitley said. He said the Rotary plans to build the facility within the next five years and will turn its management over to a tax exempt entity.

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